



City of Brookhaven, GA

2021 City Council Advance

February 20, 2021

8:30

Via Zoom webinar - Feb 20, 2021 08:30 AM Eastern Time (US and Canada)

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There was technical difficulties and Advance started late. All presentations are available in the agenda packet online.

8:45 AM – 9:00 AM: Mayor’s Introduction (John Ernst) – Mayor Ernst addressed the pandemic and how the City had persevered, continued services, while working within a at home model. He spoke how the yearly Advance set the stage for the year and future years.

9:00 AM – 9:30 AM: 2020 City Council Advance Recap (Christian Sigman) – Mr. Sigman recapped the five years of the Advance sessions. He shared his Zoom screen to present the mission and vision statements of the City. The statements entailed what the City did to do what the community wanted. He recapped the last five Advance sessions:

- **2017 Advance** focused on a legislation agenda and having a regional and national presence. In 2017 Advance there was discussion of strategic financing and funding for plans and infrastructure work. Brookhaven had been successful meeting these goals. From the 2017 Advance focus, communications, public engagement, customer service, and outreach had improved.
- **2018 Advance** addressed the City’s specific debt structures and financing to make progress on master plans and capital plans across the City. These plans/projects were

taken on in 2019. During the 2018 Advance, discussion occurred about reconstituting the Brookhaven BCVB, and BCVB is fully functioning today and doing good work. Last topic addressed was human capital management, directing that the City make sure the City had competitive salaries training and retention policies. The City did complete a review of the salaries and policies and council approved some policy changes in April 2019. Salaries and benefits and policies were changed, and now the City has a waiting list to join Brookhaven Police Department.

- **Advance 2019** talked about specific CIP financing for the various transportation projects. In 2019, Council addressed projects and moving around funding and direction in those projects as they were getting up and running. Council re-engaged MARTA 2.0, and received a demographic update and how City had changed from its cityhood to 2021.
- **2020 Advance** focused on sustainability, having a strong Stormwater Fund, and consideration and agreeing on need for a rate increase. Council addressed the City Centre Master Plan which is now in full engagement process. There was an update of the 2020 census process.

FOCUS AREAS – Mr. Sigman summarized the 2021 Advance focus areas:

- Greenspace Acquisition
- Park Bond Capital Improvement Program Update
- Historic Resources

9:00 AM – 10:00 AM: Greenspace Acquisition (Christian Sigman) The Power Point is available in the record. Mr. Sigman showed via his Zoom screen where the City was, before, and after. Walkability has improved dramatically in last four years. Arcgis mapping of walkability to greenspace was shown. City has identified parcels that may be strategic purchases/moves to further increase walkability. Questions and discussion followed about increasing walkability, and making connections through-out neighborhoods.

9:30 AM – 10:37 a.m.: Park Bond Capital Improvement Program Update (Lee Croy, Brian Borden, Robert Mullis) – Power Point is available in the record. Items addressed:

- Lee Croy reviewed Park Bond history, Park Bond Oversight Committee, financial transparency, communications. He reviewed parks per district.
- Council Member Jones noted Rebecca Chase Williams Way sign at Blackburn was bent.
- Council Member Jones was getting wonderful feedback about the marquee fence at Blackburn.
- Council Member Jones asked about shade structures for playground at Blackburn Park. Discussion included that structures should blend with existing environment and playground. Staff is to look at adding.

- The Asphalt under the road at Murphey Candler will follow existing elevations and alignment but to be reconstructed at same location of existing road. The playground and community green will fit within the Horseshoe road.
- Boardwalk will be to the south and was the next project out to bid with Purchasing Department. This will be design build approach. The project will have special viewing area. Photos are provided in Power Point.
- Murphey Candler Park South Trail project bid award was on next Tuesday's meeting (February 23 meeting).
- Staff has gone through effort to minimize tree removal for projects in Murphey Candler.
- The Scout Hut at Murphey Candler will be demolished late summer. It has asbestos, lead paint on building and mold on interior. The overall cost of removing issues would be cost prohibited. Therefore, permits, and conducting bid process will occur to take building down.
- There has been extensive effort for input and outreach for the Lake House. There was a virtual open house for Monday night.
- Council Member Jones commented that a lot of projects had been discussed often and stressed that tree preservation was top priority. She was appreciative of work and creativity making the park along the horseshoe accommodating and within tree preservation. She thanked everyone and asked that tree preservation continue to be stressed to contractors.
- Council Member Jones asked if seat walls could be higher. Lee Croy will reach out to design team regarding the seat walls across lawn. This would make space more usable.
- Council Member Jones commented about the playground equipment at Murphey Candler Park was exciting. She thanked everyone for all of hard work.
- Mayor Ernst asked about pool parking and he thought there would be some type of connectivity to the lake trail. Lee Croy said there have been discussions and he will take another look. Staff was aware of the need and desire for that.
- The Ashford Park splashpad with seat wall and new pavilion were under contract. Plans were to open splashpad in the spring. Brookhaven granite will be around the columns of the building. DeKalb County Board of Health considers a splashpad as a swimming pool so all items must meet all signage, showers, have emergency phones, and other regulations to be followed for safety. Pictures are in the Power Point presentation in agenda packet. It will be a good product. Mayor Ernst asked if court was staying. There was established lawn area, but park program does not include that work. Court would stay in place. It was a flat pad.
- Lynwood Park's revised masterplan had splashpad and additional parking instead of lazy river.
- Briarwood Park old pool could not be repaired and made up to code, so new facility was accomplished. Pictures of the construction process of the pool are in the Power Point presentation. Waterworks Aqua Design conducted work. Lee Croy addressed some of the construction issues such as soil conditions and working with Georgia Power during a

pandemic. Some of items at end of project had to go in sequence. Council Member Park had a good ribbon cutting event.

- Council Member Park commented the pool was the best pool in Georgia.
- Mr. Croy addressed Briarwood Phase II addressing the garden area, trail system, outdoor classroom, new pavilion around the garden, new pavilion for tennis use, and parking lot improvements around rec center. Staff will work with Council and Oversight Committee for priorities in consideration of funding. The entry off of Briarwood Way will be closed and become part of the trail system. The entry signage will be relocated to Briarwood Road.
- Mr. Croy continued to explain that Lose and Associates did master planning for Brookhaven Park, separate from Greenberg. Master plan included dog park improvements, new building up in existing garden area, improvements along Peachtree Road and playground. Because of situation with County, improvements on County side are not planned right now. City will not be doing stage area or building beside existing garden or frontage along Peachtree Road. Proceeding on city side of property line, will be fully replacing pavilion at dog park and greatly improving playground area. The county side of property line, City was proposing to improve the parking lot – 50 parking spaces. He showed pictures of existing parking lot showing need for improvements. He continued to show current features of the park as working with property lines right now and proposed features.
- Council Member Simmons asked if delay of County would have to change plans due to topography since plans were done. Mr. Lee replied no as long as parking lot was included. He showed an area of potential grade change if parking lot could not be improved. The detention was on both sides of the property line and staff would have to look at it further. Staff had to look at the access to get to City's side. The building and playground could be proceeded. There was a lot of conversations at higher levels with easements and agreements between two parties to get this going.
- Mayor Ernst asked about the turf area. Lee Croy would have to get more dimensions for the Mayor.
- Lee Croy presented timeline, summarizing each project's timelines. It is available in the agenda packet.
- Council Member Jones asked that the project timeline slide be sent to Mayor and Council. Lee Croy will send out. The slide is available in the agenda packet.
- Council Member Jones asked for the park bond resolution, Attachment A slide with project breakdowns to also be sent to Council. The slide is available in the agenda packet.

At 10:37 p.m. everyone took break to 10:50 a.m.

10:50 PM – 11:08 p.m.: Invasive Plant Removal by Brian Borden – The Power Point is available in the record.

Council Member Jones referred to asking about removing invasive plants by hand sometime back; that was not feasible. There was concern about products being used near water environments. Brian Borden addressed how contractors handled that concern. Mr. Borden explained they stay out of stream buffer which was within the 25-foot stream buffer. They do target spraying, by doing on isolated spots or on plants. It was not broadcast spraying. Council Member Gebbia commented that invasive plants were happening due to years of neglect. He asked about cost to maintain years forward. There were 3-4 years' worth of bond money funding to control invasive species. It was cheaper to maintain instead of letting get out of hand. City needs to have a more formalized budget to keep the invasive species under control. Invasive plants are ongoing due to birds bringing in seeds. It is Mother Nature. City needs to think about Phase 2.

Mayor Ernst asked if the new parks maintenance staff would start keeping up with invasive plants and if the City would provide training on master gardening levels. Mr. Borden explained how staff did not know the level of maintenance in 3-4 years to answer that question at this time. The long-term goal would be to have maintenance in the budget. Mayor Ernst commented about the need to look at placing this in maintenance and staffing levels and education of staff. Mr. Sigman replied this would be looked at within the operating budget in the future.

11:10 a.m. – 11:27 a.m.: Parks Bond Systemwide Security Project – IT Director Robert Mullis – Mr. Sigman stated Mr. Mullis worked with Mr. Borden and Police Department regarding security. He was to check/review and report on the coverage in parks and buildings. The Power Point presentation is in the agenda packet.

- The Police Department had the LPRs and security cameras.
- Mr. Mullis reported on the upgrades and cell coverage in the parks. There are three carriers in the parks. Most parks are good for reception.
- Questions and discussion continued. Murphey Candler seemed to have the most issues due to the terrain and activity in the park.
- There is the promise that 5G will make coverage better. Lot of carriers are still working on 5G and it is still spotty.
- All parks are surrounded by residential who are paying for the plans. All carriers have one-two year upgrade plans across their infrastructure.
- The plans were given to the carriers and they know where the weak areas are.
- Robert Mullis is to reach out to providers to check into better signal strength coverage in specific areas of the parks.

- The slide in the Power Point shows variances of coverage – low to high – does not mean no coverage.
- In-house security systems were updated at Lynwood and Briarwood. Cameras were extended to Briarwood pool and will be extended to the Lynwood pool when it is built.
- License plate readers (LPRs) were noted. Council asked if there were any pings on the LPR cameras at the parks. Mr. Sigman will check with Police Department and get back with Council.
- Mr. Mullis showed examples of the live cameras. He showed live coverage at Peachtree Creek Greenway and other sites such as North Druid Hills area, Briarwood and Lynwood recreation centers.
- The cameras are often four-way cameras. The cameras are restrictive access and some cameras are private cameras and City supervisors and above ranks have access. The cameras will be tied into the new Police Department Building's large displays (15 monitors).
- Mayor Ernst pointed out that as do the completion of projects, LPRs and cameras will be installed. There will be camera coverage when coming in and going out of parks.
- Council Member Jones asked Mr. Mullis for screen shots. It would be useful to show how easy it was and effective for those neighborhoods considering cameras.
- Mr. Sigman stated that limited access was practiced because review of camera shots use a lot of bandwidth.

11:27 a.m. – 11:38 a.m.: Historic Resources (Patrice Ruffin) The Power Point is available in the record. Ms. Ruffin spoke about historic resources inventory. She presented the comprehensive plan community work program, previous efforts, historic resources story map and next steps. The next steps were to share with neighbors for additional input, go live with story map of city website, establish a dedicated historical resources website with links to resources such as DeKalb County Historical Society, Georgia Historical Society, etc. and consider engaging a professional historian in 2022 to chronicle the first ten years of Brookhaven's incorporation. Council Member Jones and Mayor Ernst commented how the City' story of the incorporation was historical and important, also. Mr. Sigman commented about the importance of the history Brookhaven's population knew about. He gave examples of how City residents knew a lot of information and history.

11:38 AM – 12:00 PM: Council District Presentations

- Council Member Jones stated most of her items had been addressed during the Advance. Her priorities included the parks and walkability. She reminded everyone of the ongoing effort to have path from I-85 Peachtree Road along Ashford Dunwoody Road. The City has come a long way. She looked forward to the Ashford Dunwoody path in District 1.
- Council Member John Park had presentation. He addressed District 2 Connectivity in his district. He spoke about having bicycle artery (tunnel) through the District. His district included Ashford Park and Drew Valley and sliver of Brookhaven Fields. Due to

topography and streams, there are three distinct neighborhoods segmented by Dresden. He addressed how the areas were hilly and getting around via walking and cycling was difficult. The number of strollers have decreased, and bicycles have increased. He spoke about the Skyland Trail Plan in the Pedestrian Bike Plan. He noted the FEMA lots purchase and the protected stormwater facilities located in the area. He addressed how there could be a bicycle artery (tunnel) through the area leveraging flood plains enhancing safety and convenience. It was in the master plan and staff was aware and he would appreciate Council's support. Staff had been aware, and he would like to focus on this connectivity.

- Council Member Madeleine Simmons spoke about how it was everyone's goal and urgency of getting out of the COVID pandemic, and the Brookhaven Park and the litigation to have all of Brookhaven Park in Brookhaven. She commented about the purchase of Langford Park and how the City was able to move some funding over for Langford Park along with some funding from the community. The City continues to look at creative ways to develop Langford Park. She addressed the upcoming Tree Ordinance rewrite and continuing to have Brookhaven tree canopy top priority. The City Centre project was to be continued to have people involved. Social Justice Equity Commission findings and recommendations are important and underway. She addressed how the affordable housing was a difficult issue.
- Council Member Gebbia had a presentation. The detailed report is available in the record. He addressed:
 - Move to create the Brookhaven Redevelopment Authority (BRA).
 - City Policy to protect rights of residents and businesses during BUHI Redevelopment (via BRA/BDA).
 - Workforce/Affordable Housing (Co-ordinating with Shirlynn) (via BRA/BDA).
 - Update current Affordable Housing requirement on developers by permitting an option to contribute to a Work Force/Affordable Housing Fund (similar to the sidewalk fund).
 - Update the City's Special Tax District for newly annexed areas.
 - Establish new requirement before an area an annex into the City of Brookhaven.
 - Formulate a City-wide contact list for all HOAs to facilitate.

Council Member Gebbia stated he looked forward to having conversation with Council. Council Member Park reiterated his focus to have the Dresden artery (tunnel) in place for connectivity. Mayor Ernst noted the City had a lot of great projects to be announced, the CIP, and that other requests was now a matter of having the money.

Mr. Sigman concluded the agenda for Advance. He was excited to roll out the historic resource effort to the community, always on look out for property acquisition, and continuous of the park bond projects. Council Member Gebbia stated he was happy to see what was on fellow council members' mind. He hoped this would continue.



Council expressed appreciation for time and efforts to put the Advance together. Mayor Ernst commented about how expanding greenspace was important to him and Council. Connecting and increasing greenspace was important. He looked forward for staff identifying locations to connect greenspace. He addressed the metric of the ten-minute walk goal to greenspace. He would like to see GIS bike ride to a park and safe bike trails and connectivity. Mayor Ernst thanked those who had viewed the Advance virtually.

The Advance adjourned at approximately 12:00 p.m.